



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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FCC and USAID to Support Broadband Partnership of the Americas

WASHINGTON D.C. – President Obama called on countries of the Western Hemisphere to join the United States in the new Broadband Partnership of the Americas (BPA). The President made the remarks during his April 14, 2012 address at the Sixth Summit of the Americas in Cartagena, Colombia.

The BPA is supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and is a voluntary and flexible framework through which governments, the private sector, multilateral organizations and the donor community can join forces to improve access to broadband and the Internet.

“The Broadband Partnership of the Americas provides participating countries with an opportunity to harness the significant potential of broadband technology to meet pressing social challenges, drive economic growth and create jobs throughout the region,” FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said.

While approximately 80 percent of the Latin American and Caribbean population have access to mobile phones, broadband use is estimated at 29 percent, falling just below the global average. Enhancing broadband access improves development outcomes, fosters economic development and increases competitiveness. The Inter-American Development Bank reports that a 10 percent increase in the region’s broadband subscriptions would boost gross domestic product (GDP) by 3.19 percent and increase productivity by 2.6 percent.

“We are very excited about this rich partnering opportunity within our own hemisphere—where we can mobilize public and private resources toward achieving more equitable access to broadband and the Internet as a key contributor to development,” said Eric Postel, USAID’s Assistant Administrator for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade.

The financial and technical resources mobilized through the BPA will be used to help countries advance a range of information technology initiatives, including:

- Developing and implementing national broadband strategies;
- Creating or upgrading universal service funds to finance the expansion of mobile and broadband technologies to rural communities;
- Improving international and regional connectivity by linking existing broadband networks;
- Collaborating on a regional effort to harmonize the use of radio frequencies; and
- Sharing best practices across the countries in the region.

The Broadband Partnership of the America’s Fact Sheet can be viewed at
http://transition.fcc.gov/ib/usaaid_fact.pdf.